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Funding available for community scholarships

OLYMPIA - Applications are now available for a program that helps Washington students attend college while encouraging community groups to raise money for scholarships.

The Community Scholarship Matching Grant, administered by the Washington Higher Education Coordinating Board, provides matching grants of \$2,000 to local non-profit groups that raise at least the same amount for college scholarships through their own fund-raising initiatives.

Established by the Legislature in 1989, the community-based scholarship program now provides about \$245,000 a year in \$2,000 matching grants to community scholarship foundations. Earlier this year, the program was awarded the National Trustees' Award from Scholarship America - the first time a state government has received the honor.

The program awards about 125 grants to community organizations each year. State legislation gives preference to organizations that affiliate with Dollars for Scholars, a national network of hundreds of community scholarship foundations across the country.

Ruta Fanning, HECB interim executive director, said that leveraging local support for college costs can help fill the growing gap between college costs that families must pay and the financial help from colleges and other means of state support.

"The Community Scholarship Matching Grant program is a real partnership between the state and local communities," said Fanning. "During these tough economic times, programs such as this one are more important than ever."

Community-based 501 (C)(3) organizations are eligible to apply for the matching grants, and applications are due April 15, 2004. Application materials are available through the Higher Education Coordinating Board at 360-753-7861. For more information about the program, visit the HECB Web site at: [<http://www.hecb.wa.gov/grants/csmg/>](http://www.hecb.wa.gov/grants/csmg/)

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